DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 050 735 LI 002 794

TITLE	Public Information and the Library.
INSTITUTION	Missouri State Library, Jefferson City.
PUB DATE	[71]
NOTE	50p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Missouri State Library, Public Information Department, 308 East High Street, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 or Missouri Library Association, Executive Office, 10 South 7th Street, Columbia, Missouri 65201
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Community Relations, *Information Dissemination, Library Services, *Publicize, *Public Libraries, *Public Opinion, *Public Relations, Television Commercials

ABSTRACT

In addition to serving the intellectual, the arty, the scholar, the housewife, and children, the library must take positive steps to update its public relations (PR) posture if it is to reach the great mass of the population who currently feel the library is not for them. The many and varied approaches possible in a good PR program include: (1) a series of ads featuring library personnel; (2) testimonials by the power group, blue-collar workers, clergy, teachers, civic officials, tradespeople and businessmen; (3) a library-sponsored panel quiz and (4) speeches by the librarian to community groups on current community problems such as environmental pollution. (MF)

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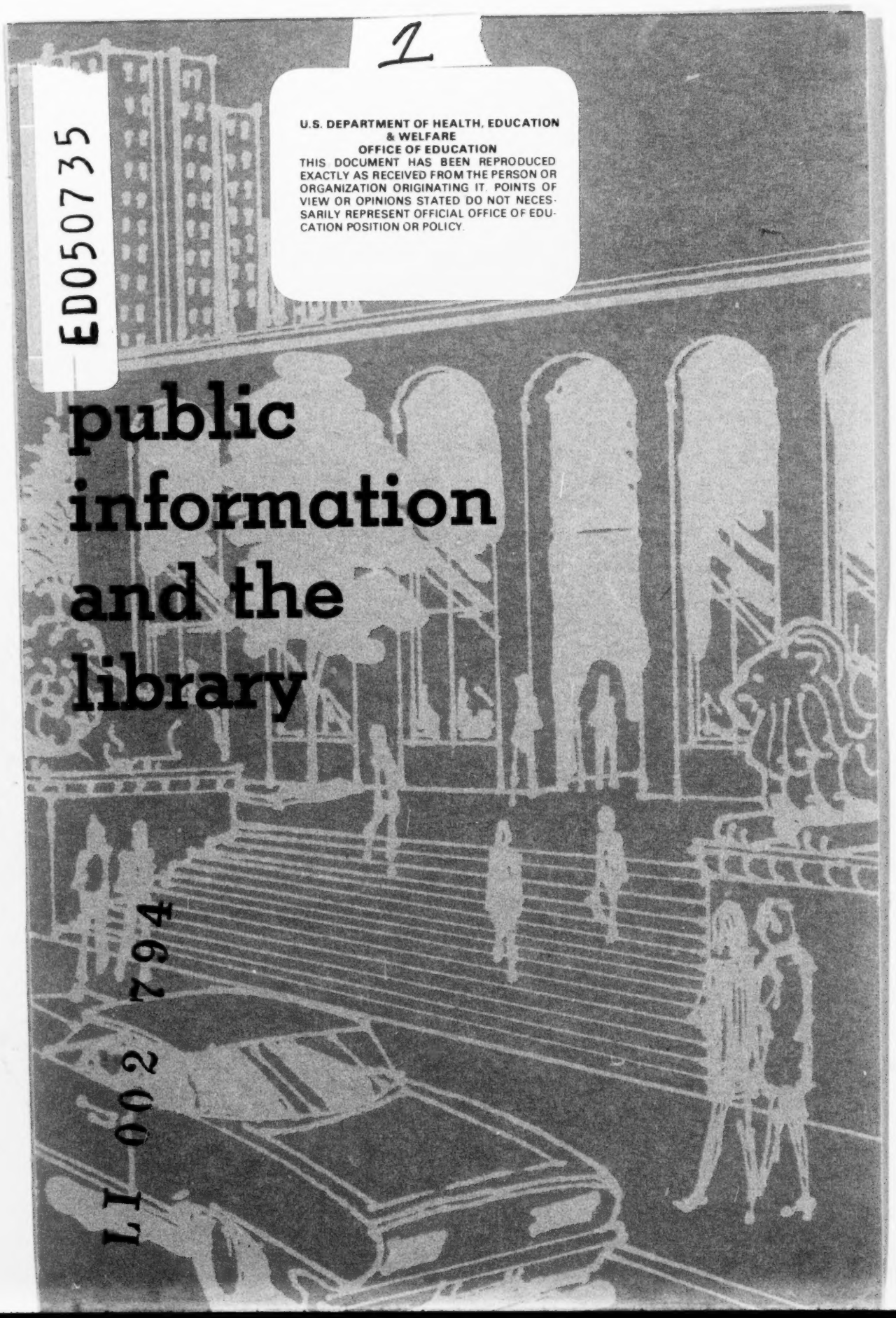
public information and the library



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FOREWORD

The general subject of public relations has been dealt with at length by many writers in the field. This material is, of course, available to any librarian interested in pursuing the subject.

The following pages are not intended to do more than point up a few ideas along public relations lines which can be put to use by the average public library. Obviously, the individual librarian is in the best position to determine what is best for his library and to conduct his PR program accordingly.

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Only free peoples can hold their purpose
and their honor steady to a common end
and prefer the interest of mankind to
any narrow interest of their own.

Woodrow Wilson

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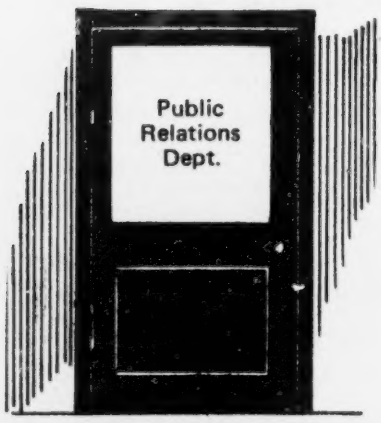
CHAPTER I

A MATTER OF PUBLIC ATTITUDE



Some understanding of the value of good public relations might have prevented John Pierpont Morgan from making his imperious public statement, "I owe the public nothing". It would surely have caused William H. Vanderbilt to withhold his scornful, "public be damned" declaration. But public relations as a working force wasn't recognized as the valued tool it is today. Ruthless barons of an earlier age could with impunity get away with unbelievably callous and disdainful public remarks, which, today, would literally ruin an individual, company or institution foolish enough to make them.

The public of that day had not yet learned something that is perfectly clear to today's public: that every business large or small is dependent, in the final analysis, on the public's attitude toward it and, hence, the degree with which it is willing to accept or use its goods or services. In short, public relations grew up as an entity

in communications as the public matured and began to insist on acceptable standards of business conduct. As a working communications tool it began to be in general use after World War I.

A DISTINCT FORCE

Public relations is recognized today as comprising all of those activities which go to make up a planned program of communications which seeks to interpret or improve the relationship of an individual or organization with the public as a whole or with special interest segments of the public.

WEBSTER SAYS PR IS:
"The art or science of developing reciprocal understanding between a person, firm, institution and the public".

There are hundreds of ways to define this catch-all term "public relations". But after all is said and done we can put it very candidly and simply: The R/x for successful public relations is:

90% - Doing good
10% - Getting credit for it

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

An effective public relations program must be based on a clear understanding of what needs to be accom-

plished for the good of the institution. In determining a proper course of action questions along the following lines need to be answered:

1. What, if anything, is wrong with the activities of the institution?

2. How are the objectives of the institution stated or defined?

(a) Are they the proper objectives?

3. What are the present stated policies toward the public? Are these policies implemented effectively?

4. Has everything possible been done to promote public good will?

5. What does the public really know about this institution? How much do we actually know about the public's attitude toward the institution?

Evaluating questions, such as these require some honest soul-searching and it could be that additional information needs to be gathered before further plans are made. It is surely no time to be defensive. If a need for more answers exists or if the answers, as known, indicate a need for adjustments and corrections, we would do well to admit it and take necessary measures. Only in this way, by an honest, thorough appraisal of the current situation, can the groundwork be prepared for an improved public relations program.

* * * * * * * *

PUBLIC RELATIONS BEGINS AT HOME

It is hardly necessary to belabor the fact that PR is the job of every staff member. In personal appearance, attitudes and actions, each person creates an impression - favorable or unfavorable - as a representative of the library.

The total of impressions of all library employees, does much to make the so-called "image" of an institution. Perhaps, more accurately, a library may be said to be a "reflection" of the people who work there. This reflection derives, too, from impressions gained via the telephone, an instrument the average librarian uses heavily in day-to-day work. The voice on the telephone must convey the smile, the interest, the sincerity that would be expressed facially in a personal contact. This isn't as easy as it sounds, especially when the call comes in at a very busy time. Unfortunately the caller cannot see that we are very busy, so he is in no position to make allowances for the situation. A flat unenthusiastic telephone voice or the voice that rasps with irritation is as bad for public relations as a frown. No, books alone do not a library make. People are the most important single force for the good of libraries. After all, libraries are basically a "people" business both in-

side and outside the library. Library employees are walking billboards for, or against, the library in the community.

INSIDE PR

Personnel relations, the development of management rapport with the staff and fostering of harmonious conditions between employees is simply the application of public relations principles within the library.

The effectiveness of the public relations program rests on a base of good internal relations. Where there is a common understanding and appreciation of the PR job plus harmony within the library, favorable conditions exist for fostering good relations with the public. Obviously, much more than proper attitudes and willingness to serve are necessary. But these are basic prerequisites to an effective, successful public relations program.

AN ALL-INCLUSIVE FORCE

"Public Relations" is, by definition, an all-inclusive term. Thus, in its broadest and most accurate sense it is not merely publicity or press relations, for example. These are functions within public relations. So, too, is advertising, which operates under the PR umbrella of a well-integrated PR

program. PR encompasses the use of all forces of communication with the public, even though involving separate and distinct groups, each coordinating with the others and directing its efforts toward the attainment of some common objective.

It should be said, at once, that public relations programs which are not in the best interests of the public are not likely to achieve success in the long run. PR should not be used to gloss over poor programs, poor products or poor service. The mandatory first step, therefore, is to put one's own house in order before embarking on a program designed to increase confidence in the institution and its credibility.

PR - WHO NEEDS IT?

An organization, it is said, succeeds or fails in a completely honest way - on the basis of true intent and ideals. At this point we should realistically face the fact that a good many good librarians are not philosophically disposed to engage in any effort that seems to smack of the commercial or private enterprise approach. The thought seems to linger that this is all really unnecessary, anyway; that people don't need to be reminded to use something they're paying for; that it's their business and prerogative to not use the library if they don't need or want its

services.

Unfortunately, people do need reminding - and pretty forceful reminding, at that. Competition for the time and attention of the public is increasingly intense and the library must communicate if it wants to hold, let alone build, its clientele. If the big majority of library users is today made up of the intellectual, the arty, the scholar, the housewife and children, as appears likely, then the library is not communicating with a great mass of the population who must feel the library is not for them.

An economist (Ernest Faveman, Life Magazine, February 14, 1964) has stated, "The U.S. faces such an explosive increase in leisure time in the next ten years that we may have to keep the unemployed portion of our population under more or less constant sedation". The implications in this statement may be the greatest challenge to libraries in the latter half of the 20th century.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Positive steps to update the library public relations posture obviously depend to a great extent on the ability of the board and management to realize that the public and the institution's relations with it must be considered in every major policy decision; that PR is

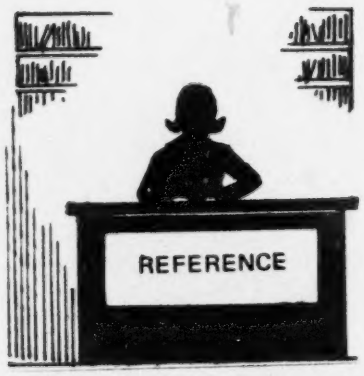
not press agentry but responsible community service. Forward-looking promotions are doomed if board, management or staff are rooted in the old traditions, prefer to maintain the library mystique, or look on positive public relations efforts as somehow crassly commercial and a violation of the library's traditional sanctity.

PART-WAY PROGRAMS

Although libraries have long discussed public relations in an abstract way as a desirable function, few have gone much beyond the discussion stage. Press clippings, as an indication, are likely to contain the bookmobile schedule and an occasional book review by the librarian, possibly a report on a club meeting held at the library. Very little initiative or creative planning is evident in most library PR programs - if they can properly be called that. It is not difficult to generate publicity and obtain good media coverage when the library is involved in the big local news story - such as the announcement and follow-up stories which would be filed, for example, on the new library to be built in the community. The continuity of public relations effort is the important ingredient. Which means finding some way to keep the library in the "live news" category during ordinary periods when no big news is breaking.

CHAPTER II

WHAT'S THERE TO SAY?



Since the library staff is an important element in a responsible PR program, why not build on this as a start?

Of course, attempting to capitalize on library personnel might first require a staff improvement program designed to fit the picture to be projected. This picture of the library - by way of its staff - should be one of warmth, sincerity, friendliness, competency, helpfulness. If this kind of picture doesn't fit the facts, the project should be set aside until such a picture can be honestly presented to the public.

Assuming we truly do have, as many libraries do, a warm, competent, sincere, friendly staff, this, unfortunately, may be apparent only to the estimated one out of five persons who actually visit the library. There is a need, then, to project the "image" beyond the library walls. This can be done through feature material furnished

the local press or through public service or paid-space ads. The message might take somewhat the following tone:

Illustration: Photo of Mrs. Foster at desk with client.

Head: Books Alone Do Not A Library Make... Books and People Do!

Copy: This is Mrs. Erma Foster, our invaluable reference librarian. Erma is known to library users far and wide in Blank County for her friendly, helpful assistance in locating books and other sources of information. "No task is too difficult for Erma", say her many friends. Erma Foster grew up in the community, went to Township High School, then to State University where she obtained a degree in Library Science. Erma Foster is real proof that books and people do make a library.

Signature: Your Public Library

If a series of ads featuring library personnel has been run, it might be well to conclude with a summary ad:

Head: What is -

The Heart of a Library?

Copy: Not books, but people - the people who work here and the people who come here. It takes the intelligent, friendly interest and help that a

good library staff provides in order to create a vital library. And, it takes the support and use of the library by people to keep it that way. We're proud of our staff and we want you to be proud of them, too. Come in and see how helpful a good library staff can be.

Sub-Head: We Present Our Library Staff

Illustration: (Picture of staff)

Copy: Brief biographical data and duties

Bottom: The Library is a "People" Business

Signed: Your Public Library

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

It is obvious that no single approach will meet the needs of every library. A library with a small staff or for other good reasons might find the sample approach incongruous. Even the very small library, however, can be very effective if it can personalize its message by way of its staff in regularly scheduled space in the local press. It can "sell" staff in local broadcast copy, too, by attributing the message to staff members. "Erma Foster, our reference librarian, says, '....'", or "Mary Smith, our children's librarian, etc, etc.", - are good ways to keep the staff before the public and at the same time

keep the public informed on library affairs.

THE TESTIMONIAL

One of the oldest forms of advertising and one which is highly effective is the testimonial. It is a technique which libraries can use to advantage as part of their overall program.

Virtually every community has a definite power structure or something very close to one in which opinions of certain individuals and groups have definite influence on the opinions of others. Endorsement in the press by the thought "influencers", along with their pictures is both practical and effective in the context of the library's community relations program. If John Jones, civic leader says, "I find our fine public library a good place to read and relax"; or if socially prominent Mrs. Carter Smythe says, "Our library is a constant source of information and pleasure to my family and me", others among the "influenced" group may be impelled to use the library more often.

In addition to the power group, it is desirable to include, as part of the newspaper series, a wide cross-section of blue-collar workers, clergy, teachers, civic officials, tradespeople and businessmen.

The testimonial, picture-and-state-

ment approach, lends itself to small-space ads - paid or public service - which can and should run for a good long while, so as to benefit from statement after statement, all complimentary to the library, the cumulative effect of which is penetrating, powerful and likely to be remembered. It has the added advantage of neighbor talking to neighbor - which always has high local-level interest and appeal.

PANEL SHOW FORMAT

Service, civic and professional club memberships are usually made up of a community's most progressive citizens. The library should maintain a close association with this leadership group. One way of promoting this posture is by creating a program which would appeal to both the clubs and the general public. An example of one such program is the library-sponsored panel quiz. The format is adaptable to both radio and television.

THE FORMAT:

Time: 30 minutes

Panel Show: Sponsored or public service

Idea: Two teams of 4-6 each compete in answering questions of a contemporary nature.

Duration: 13 weeks if sponsored, otherwise optional

Questions might deal with pollution, inflation, or any suitable local or national issue which average contestants might be expected to have seen in print or through broadcasting.

Staff: Moderator, station personnel

Sponsor: Local library (if public service) or local businesses if station sells program.

Props: Two tables, 8 chairs, tables equipped with buzzers (plus signal lights if produced on TV), score board showing team standings.

Approximate general sequence:

3 minutes - Moderator sets stage by giving rules of contest, standings of clubs and introducing current contestants, and librarian.
3 minutes - Service clubs are given opportunity to state their club objectives and programs.
9 minutes - Questions and answers
3 minutes - Half-way score announced. Librarian may display or announce current book selections or give other library news of interest.
9 minutes - Questions and answers.
3 minutes - Winner declared, next week's contestants

announced, other sponsoring organizations mentioned, if any. Wrap-up.

---

30 minutes

The panel show format, as tested on TV has been found to have these advantages: gives good exposure to both library and librarian on a sustaining basis; tightens ties of library with community leaders; attracts good audience* which builds as elimination contest proceeds; gives radio/TV stations opportunity to sell time to local sponsors - banks, savings and loan institutions, etc. - if they wish; gives service clubs the opportunity to state their objectives and announce club programs.

The librarian is the central control on the program. Librarian and staff originate questions and the answers. Librarian and staff line up the clubs in advance and programs are taped a week ahead of time.

** In St. Joseph, Missouri, KFEQ-TV (now KQTV) reported approximate audience of 6,000 families per week, on Saturday, viewing library quiz show: "Guess Again". Public service time - 10 weeks.*

PUBLICITY

Publicity is the hand-maiden of a sound PR program but not a PR program in itself. It offers full and frank information of public interest. What the publicist thinks is news is not important; it is what media thinks is important that determines usage. Therefore library publicity must be geared to the editor or broadcaster's requirements. Sometimes a query on the interest of media in the story saves time and effort. News pressure on any given date may be a determining factor on use of a story. Late-breaking news may take precedence over any story at any time.

Publicity tries to clearly explain institutional plans and actions and in so doing it does not cover up, distort or whitewash policies or programs. On the character of the library's publicity rests its reputation for integrity and credibility.

The nuances possible in publicity releases are many and varied. In issues involving any public concern, the tax-supported library must be careful to strike the right tone and note. Desired reaction may hinge on the choice of a verb or adjective. The importance of good publicity in the overall program should not be underestimated and argues for a certain minimum of expertise in its preparation. Libraries, if they do not actually write their own releases

should make sure that the facts are correctly interpreted and used in local media. In the absence of a professional journalist on the staff, the one charged with the publicity writing should take every opportunity to study professional techniques - under a practicing journalist or perhaps as a student in a copy-writing course.

INVERTED PYRAMID STYLE

In developing the tightly written release preferred by editors, it may help to keep in mind the so-called "inverted pyramid" style of news story construction. The inverted pyramid has the main and essential facts at the top with succeeding items decreasing in importance toward the bottom. This facilitates editing, as the story can be trimmed from bottom to top, without complete re-writing, retaining the essential facts as contained in the lead and early paragraphs.

THE FACT SHEET

In larger library programs such as tax elections, an open house, special exhibits or other events of major importance, publicity should include a fact sheet for media unless individual library-originated releases are to be prepared. The fact sheet lists all

pertinent information from which a story can be prepared in advance of the event. The pre-release made possible by furnishing complete factual data - names, biographical data, dates, subjects, complete agenda - assures a better chance for placement with media and public awareness of the event with subsequent better attendance or participation.

If the library has a publicist covering an event he will make sure that pictures of key people and events are made available to media on a day-to-day basis during the event or arrange for photo coverage by media. Also interviews, special features and background color stories are possible for additional coverage besides the straight news.

The news release deserves - requires - the full attention of the library administration to see that maximum impact value is written into each story. The dull, uninspired release tends in time to alienate even well-meaning editors and tags a library as a poor news source. It need not be if imagination and initiative are brought to bear on this important phase of the library's business. While there may be little of the exciting in the general run of library news, excitement is not the main objective. The real need is to get the most out of a typical library story.

In the following examples, two versions of the story are possible - the

straight, terse, underplayed news report (#1) or the feature-type story based on the same set of assumed facts (#2). The #1 version can very well represent the way a local editor might treat the bare facts of the story furnished him. In #2, the story, treated as a feature, with suitable picture, would be likely to score higher in readership. Since it is not always possible to get feature story coverage by the newspaper, it rests with the library to furnish a suggested feature approach, which might be developed as in #2.

ROTARIANS HEAR TALK

ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Mrs. Verna Schultz, Township librarian, addressed Rotary Club members Tuesday noon at Nelson's Restaurant on the environmental crisis. Mrs. Schultz presented some interesting data on various ways in which Americans are contributing to the pollution of our land, air and waterways. She said, "'America the Beautiful' is in real danger of becoming a big disaster area". John Smith, Rotary Club President, said the Club appreciated receiving the additional facts Mrs. Schultz has collected. All Rotarians, Smith said, are dedicated to the active support of the move to develop a cleaner, more livable environment.

Thirty-five Rotary Club members were in attendance at the meeting.

#2 This is "America the Beautiful"?

LIBRARIAN PRESENTS ALARMING FACTS

ON POLLUTION TO ROTARIANS

Township librarian, Mrs. Verna Schultz, served Rotarians plenty of food for thought on the environmental crisis at the Club's noon luncheon meeting Tuesday.

It was plain from the detailed data Mrs. Schultz presented that unless all people, world-wide, cooperate in an action program against environmental pollution, and do so very soon, we may well reach the point of no return in the not too distant future.

"The sheer volume of our waste is appalling", Mrs. Schultz said. "For example, we Americans every year junk seven million cars, wear out 100 million tires, use 20,000 million tons of paper, 28 billion bottles, and 48 billion cans".

"In the process of consuming, Americans produce half of the world's industrial pollution. U.S. plants each year discard 165 million tons of waste and pump 172 million tons of smoke and fumes into the air".

Mrs. Schultz pointed out that much more than huge sums of money are needed to clean up the mess.

"Most authors agree", she said, "that new strict disciplines are bound to be forced upon all of us if we seriously intend to win this battle". She declared, "We need to ask ourselves how far we want to go in the name of progress? Are we prepared to pay the price - which could be life itself?"

In conclusion, Mrs. Schultz said, "To be aware of all aspects of the problem is a prerequisite to effective action. There is much material on the environmental problem available

at the public library to help our understanding".

Thirty-five Rotarians attended the Tuesday meeting.

(The complete text of Mrs. Schultz's address and a list of selected reading on ecology are available at the Public Library).

AND, WHY NOT A LITTLE HUMOR?

Librarians have at their fingertips a wealth of material which can be made into an occasional item or even a series which provides the lighter touch often appreciated and remembered by the community. This might be a typical example:

> Adlai Stevenson was fond of recounting the time a clubwoman approached him after he had addressed her group and exclaimed: "Dear Mr. Stevenson, your speech was simply superfluous". To which he gravely replied, "Thank you, I hope to have it published posthumously". "Oh, won't that be nice. The sooner the better!"

Credit line would follow, in this instance, *James A. Wechsler, The New York Post, as reprinted in Progressive, Dec. 1970.*

COURTESY OF YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

FORM OF RELEASE

The mechanics of preparing a news release in the accepted form are simple but may increase chances of the story being used. At any rate, it will not be ruled out on the basis of format. Following is accepted form of release:

Your name
Your telephone number
Release date

(This space is for Editor's use)

Start your story about one third of the way down the page. Double-space and indent. Type the story if at all possible.

Leave generous margins for the editor's markings.

Short paragraphs are preferred by almost all newspapers.

When writing more than one page, do not carry over with half a sentence. Each page should be self-contained. If possible, do not end in the middle of a paragraph, either. The story may be torn into strips to be distributed among several typesetters. Every page should be complete.

"30" means "the end"

or

If carried forward put "more" at bottom of page

-30-

CHAPTER III

THE LIBRARY LEVY CAMPAIGN

The public relations base which has been laid down by a library - the "picture" it has managed to reflect in the minds of citizens - will go a long way toward determining the success or failure of revenue-raising efforts when the time comes. Some libraries in considering a tax levy or bond drive are somewhat reluctant to beat the drums too hard. If the levy is to be considered at school-tax election time, it is sometimes felt that the "silent treatment" will allow the library tax to ride through on the tail of the school-tax issue. This may well be the proper course in given situations and areas. The other approach, the one favored by professional fund-raisers, may also be an effective program where aggressive tactics are indicated, as in a drive for funds to build a new library. The approach here rests on a three-legged base:

1. Determining the local "power structure" including the "silent power"

that speaks not publicly but carries weight privately within the power groups.

2. Soliciting the interest and action of selected members of the group.

3. Involving as many people as possible in the actual campaign. This is the key word in successful campaigns: "Involvement".

The power group - the movers and shakers of the community - may be found among the clergy, bankers, leading businessmen, industry officials, leading farmers, teachers and administrative faculty, government extension officers or civic and professional club members.

Professional drives are generally conducted on a team basis, wherein definite assignments are made to insure contacting all areas of a community. The rule of thumb among professionals in the capital campaign field is that 80-90% of financial support in a given drive will come from but 10-20% of a community's citizens. These 10-20% are normally represented by the power group which professionals first contact for inclusion in the "advance" or "major" gift categories. The securing of pledges or cash from the top group ("influencers") is publicized and this in turn, serves to help bring in the smaller contributors from the 80-90% of the remaining citizenry ("influenced") who are asked to supply the remaining 10-20% of funds.

In the context of the average li-

brary fund campaign while the power group's direct financial support is not a factor, this group's favorable endorsement is.

Professional campaign techniques, in other respects, may be found helpful. Achieving a successful drive relies largely on the extent of involvement obtained by team members having a common identification with persons contacted. Thus, like contacts like; bank presidents contact bank presidents, farmers call on farmers, etc.

The master plan of attack involves careful preparation of a detailed breakdown of the community's industry, farms, schools, churches, civic groups, business and professions so that every segment of the community is certain to be covered.

At least one basic piece of handout and mail-out literature is required. This material "makes the case" for the need and what is to be done with the funds required. It is a simple, factual, straightforward exposition of the facts and strongly emphasizes the "reasons why" from both community and institution's point of view. This basic piece serves as the keynote copy for press and broadcast background information plus its uses through distribution in the community.

A second important ingredient in professional fund raising campaigns is

the pledge card which has, incidentally, a valuable counterpart in the library election petition. Signatures secured from people of standing early in the campaign are of material help in obtaining other signatures.

Signed petitions can serve as a barometer of the extent of favorable action on election day; conversely, refusal to sign gives some gauge of soft spots in the potential vote.

Petitions are a means of providing workers with a reason for face-to-face contact - a "door opener" - and an opportunity to discuss the issue. Maximum effective use of petitions obviously presupposes their use as a "selling tool" to obtain many more signatures than the required five percent of qualified signatures needed before an election can be called in Missouri.

CAMPAIGN PUBLICITY:

There is no substitute for intensive publicity in advance of election day. Following establishment of the campaign organization, publicity should be sent out on an ascending scale beginning about six or eight weeks before election. It is desirable to set up an official campaign headquarters where activities being pursued are a matter of public knowledge and where campaign assignments and meetings can be held.

In general, campaign publicity would include the following:

Radio/TV:	Schedule of radio/TV increasing in frequency up to election day. Live interviews on both radio and TV.
Newspapers:	Editorial copy, statements of comnity and farm leaders favoring the new library and urging affirmative action.
Speakers Bureau:	Members appearance before key groups.
Telephone Campaign:	Those designated to call and remind people previously contacted and those not contacted.
Display Signs:	School poster contest or committee - prepared signs. Adequate publicity during contest and awards after completion.
Car Pool:	To use in committee work during campaign and to carry people to polls election day.
Mailing Department:	To see that campaign literature is distributed according to plan and in adequate supply.

CHAPTER IV

BROADCAST MEDIA

The support of local radio and television stations is vitally important to the library. As the ALA PR Reporter of July, 1963 put it:

"Getting general public service coverage on television on a local TV station is not a very difficult job if a strong, continuing and mutually cooperative relationship has been established between your library and the station. Frequently the station, in making use of the library materials, discovers program possibilities itself. More often, however, it is necessary for the library to make the possibilities known to the station. It is important for the station to see the "big picture" of library service in your community, including your long-range objectives. Then the local TV station can become one of your strongest allies. The same is true of radio".

RADIO

Spot radio is an extremely effective and flexible medium for library use and is widely used in Missouri. Since few libraries are staffed to supply air copy of their own origination they are

dependent, usually, on local radio station personnel to convert library news, written for the eye, to radio copy. Occasionally a commercial producer may offer libraries a syndicated series of transcribed spots on a general subject such as Library Services. These are used to advantage on local stations as a public service with the local library's signature. Stations prefer spots that are ready for use on tape or transcription. These are preferable from the library's standpoint as well, for it usually means better voice-casting and production.

SPOT SCHEDULING

Radio spots are most effectively employed when they have the advantage of heavy repetition increasing in frequency, as might be required prior to an election. This is "saturation" scheduling and can run from five spots a day up to ten or twelve or more on the last day of the campaign.

However, the usual use of local spot radio by libraries involves the irregularly-scheduled news releases supplied to the local station. Sustaining library programs are mostly of the book review or children's hour variety. If the library has good rapport with the station, many special library-sponsored programs are possible - the talk show

wherein visiting celebrities or local personalities are interviewed, the panel quiz show (as previously discussed), visiting celebrities in the arts, or the taped remarks of various authors, for example.

Radio's big advantage is in its ability to swing into action faster than the print media. This makes it possible to get the word out quickly on important events- particularly helpful where timing is important.

SPOT PREPARATION

In general, 125-135 words will fill the average 60-second spot. Announcers' delivery speeds vary but it is far better to keep announcements short and punchy, to give the announcer time needed for emphasis.

The 30-second spot (about 50 words), the 20-second spot (about 35 words) and the 10-second spot (10-12 words) have a better chance to get on the air due to heavy commercial traffic on most radio stations today.

In writing for radio, the opening sentence or two are the most important in the spot, and may well determine its effectiveness. These opening words must capture the attention of the casual listener (who may be listening with only one ear, anyway) or the spot will be over and lost. Assuming, for example,

that you want to write a spot to encourage a good turnout for a library affair, say an open house, rather than the simple "Calendar of Coming Events" type of announcement, you could just as easily have the announcer say:

Announcer: Did I hear you say "open house"? Where? At the library! I wouldn't miss it for the world and I'm sure everyone will want to attend next Thursday evening. There'll be.... etc.

A word of caution: we have all heard the spot in which so much attention has been given to production, that the "business" overshadows the essential message. A spot can be so busy developing a story line or a clever play on words that the listener couldn't say five minutes later what the spot was trying to sell. In any event, it is good technique to close the spot with a summary sentence or two for late tuners-in and those who may have missed the points made earlier in the spot. Sample:

----Don't forget. You're invited to the library open house, next Thursday evening at 8:00 o'clock. We'll be looking for you.

GENERAL COPY

Probably few libraries would be inclined to take on a regular schedule of copy-writing for local media, and it is not the purpose of this booklet to attempt to teach copy writing. Many excellent sources for this information are available to librarians interested in studying copy techniques.

Running the library is a full-time job and usually leaves a minumum of time for the public information function. The alternatives would be to assign someone to learn the fundamentals of preparing usable copy on a planned basis or by hiring someone who already knows the techniques.

If the public information function must be served without specialized staff these are a few guidelines to be borne in mind in preparing the copy:

Good copy for news media is not literature and should be without literary pretensions. Length of copy depends on what needs to be said and it should be said purposefully without embellishment. It should be remembered that as a general rule more than half of the public audience is unlikely to understand copy that averages more than seventeen words to a sentence. It has been said that a piece of copy is like a pot of soup: the more it is boiled down the stronger it's flavor becomes.

TELEVISION

The "ID" (for identification) is usually a slide which is flashed on between programs and chain breaks. Some familiar "IDs" are seen regularly for Tourism, Cancer Research, Heart Fund, Care, etc. A library ID symbol can be furnished the TV station if it is agreeable to using it as a public service. The ID may be a simple illustration - say a set of books, and brief copy such as "Use and support your Public Library". The repetitive effect of the ID makes this a good tool for library use where the station is willing to cooperate.

TV SPOTS

Spots for TV should be, as in radio, very concise. A 10-second spot runs about 12 words; a 20-second spot about 35 words; a 60-second spot should contain about 120 words. Good pictures along with a spot improve the chances it will be used. Library spots are frequently usable on newscasts or homemaker shows - the latter is also a practical place for the librarian's guest appearance.

EDUCATIONAL TV

Librarians have a fine opportunity in the rapid development of educational

TV stations. Librarians in the viewing area of educational TV stations should be alert to the opportunities for personal appearances in connection with library interests. The educational TV staff may also be willing to cooperate in producing films on the library and its services.

TV NEWS RELEASES

News releases for TV generally follow the same format as press releases. Some stations prefer slightly wider margins, less copy and triple-spacing. However, most librarians will find it best to send the regular newspaper release to the TV station's news department where the professionals can rewrite the copy in accordance with their own policy and style. In any event, librarians can consult with the station to determine the best procedures to follow in presenting library news for television.

CHAPTER V

VISUAL TOOLS

LIBRARY PHOTOGRAPHY

The value of liberal use of pictures in connection with library news should not be underestimated.

Good pictures invite readership; readership potential improves editorial acceptence. These factors are considered by editors in judging publicity photos: news value, human interest and composition. Most libraries manage to meet the first two requirements fairly well but often fail on number three: composition. The chances of a picture being used by an editor are immeasurably improved when it shows people doing something rather than looking at the camera. While it is not our purpose here to dwell on photographic techniques, there is one little hint which must be passed along as a way of improving a great many public library staff-originated photos. This is the matter of background. It is not enough to show a person working at a

desk, charging out a book, talking to a group of children or what not. One must also be certain a potted plant or a lampstand in back of the featured subject doesn't appear to grow out of his head. In most instances it is possible to pick out a neutral, non-interfering background for the picture. If the shot is made with a long depth of field in back of the subject, this can go out of focus producing a neutral background effect also.

If there is any one area of library news photography that deserves attention it is in the vital area of composition.

PHOTO RELEASE HINTS

1. Caption your photograph, even though accompanied by a news release.
2. Do not write on photos or use clips or staples. Best method is to attach caption with rubber cement to bottom of photo.
3. Protect pictures in mailing by sandwiching between cardboard.
4. Be sure to identify <u>everyone</u> in the photo.

PICTURE QUALITY

Remember that newspapers reproduce from engravings onto porous newsprint. The quality of the engraving determines the quality of the reproduction and

both are predetermined by the quality of the photo. Glossy prints are preferable for newspaper use as they will give sharper reproduction.

CROPPING

Good cropping can often improve a picture. If only a portion of your negative is worth using, crop out all the rest and have only the best section developed. Watch for elements that distract from the center of interest and, if possible, crop these.

ARTWORK

A small or medium-sized library is not in a position to readily obtain high quality, professional artwork. Often the art services are concentrated in the larger cities and while this does not mean they are inaccessible they may be inconveniently located. What is more probable they are too expensive to warrant their use for most local literature.

Most libraries rely on fairly simple line-art as drawn, usually, by a staff member. This suffices for many library routine pieces such as booklists, programs, etc. In more ambitious undertakings, free-lance artists may be available through the local art department of the area schools or colleges.

Sometimes a printer in the area will have an artist of sorts on his staff who will help with the art provided the printer gets the print job.

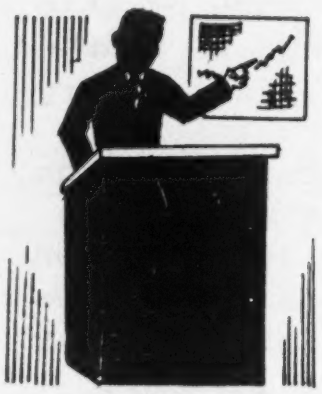
Another source of art work is in the syndicated art field - much of this more-or-less "canned" art can be adapted, through a little ingenuity, for library use.

Clipbooks of art, featuring a wide range of acceptable subject matter are available at comparatively low cost per unit on a subscription basis. Services from whom listings of available art may be requested are: Harry A. Volk Art Studios, Box 4058, Rockford, Illinois, 61110 and Redi-Art, Inc., 30 East 10th Street, New York, New York, 10003.

As in any creative service one gets what one is willing to pay for. Good artwork is never inexpensive but with care, passable, mass-produced art can be used to advantage in most local library literature.

CHAPTER VI

PR ADMINISTRATION



It is important that one person be charged with responsibility for carrying out the public relations program. This person should cooperate with the trustees and the library administration in developing a program based on established priorities. He then should have full authority to carry it out. The PR person should be kept aware of and participate in administration planning in order to be fully effective. With the projects, plans, and area of responsibility defined and centralized, chances of public relations fiascoes based on top-of-the-head decisions can be drastically reduced or eliminated entirely.

In very few instances, is the librarian in a position to actually handle the PR job due to limitation of time but a member of the staff might be appointed public relations officer. It is often possible for a library to obtain a qualified person to handle public relations on a part-time basis. A member of the local newspaper or radio station

staff, for example. might be willing to lend a hand with the library's program for a small consideration.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Whoever is doing the public relations job for the library should strive to attend as many meetings of the journalism profession as possible. Attending meetings of these groups helps the individual to develop and keep alive the professional approach and outlook and stimulates creativity.

It virtually goes without saying that the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with fellow practitioners is bound to help anyone concerned with the many-faceted public relations business. Local broadcasters and editors can be helpful in acquainting one with professional organizations meeting in his general area. Missouri Press Association, headquartered in Columbia, Missouri, is also very helpful through its associate membership program in keeping the public relations officer abreast of developments in the news field. Missouri Broadcasters Association, Jefferson City, Missouri, speaks for at least half of the radio stations in Missouri and is also a good source of help and information.

The ALA PR Reporter is published monthly by ALA and is a good source of

general public relations ideas and information. Subscription price is $8.00 per year. Order from American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60611.

A CHECKLIST

An indication of the effectiveness of the library's public relations program can be gained from reviewing the questions below:

_____Is the library location clearly marked? If on a side street, is there a directional sign at the nearest major intersection? If in a building which houses other functions, are corridors leading to the library clearly marked?

_____Is the library staff completely informed on library policy, procedures? Does the staff know the board members?

_____Does the librarian or PR person know the local newspaper editor, and has a visit been made to the newspaper officially? To the local television or radio station manager? (To know these key people socially is an asset, but a visit should be made to his office "on business").

_____Do the librarian and board members attend professional meetings at every opportunity? Are attendances at these meetings publicized?

_____Does the librarian know other public, special and school librarians in the area? Have areas for cooperation been explored?

_____Are newsmen and other librarians given special invitation to attend library-sponsored activities?

_____Do board members, staff members and the librarian see and read many professional library publications?

_____Does the library maintain a file on local presidents and secretaries?

_____Has the librarian sought speaking engagements?

_____Has the library had a display <u>out</u>side the library in the past six months?

_____Does the library participate in National Library Week?

_____Is the library board planning to seek public tax support soon?

_____How long has it been since the library was mentioned in the newspaper? On the radio? On television? Since the librarian spoke to a community organization? Since

the library circulated an informational booklet or leaflet?

Additional copies of this booklet may be obtained, without charge from either of the following:

Missouri State Library
Public Information Department
308 East High Street
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

or

Missouri Library Association
Executive Office
10 South 7th Street
Columbia, Missouri 65201

"ONLY <u>FREE</u> PEOPLE MAY READ <u>FREELY</u>"